

In the Specification

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 14, line 16 as follows:

A preferred marking component for use in the invention is a compound including an oxymetal anion. In combination with a salt, this typically allows marking with a diode or CO.sub.2 laser. A suitable oxymetal anion component may be one or more of a range of materials, for example, ammonium octamolybdate, bis[2-(ethylhexylamine)]molybdate or di(cyclohexylamine)molybdate. A suitable ink formulation comprises 10-50% w/w of this component.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 9 as follows:

An essential component for use in the present invention is one or more metal salts. A preferred metal is copper. Other suitable salts are of monovalent or multivalent metals, e.g., a transition metal such as Fe or Zn. Poly-metal salts may also be used. They are characterized by the presence of two or more metal centres in oxide compounds and can typically be composed of a number of different transition metals and their oxides. For instance, a copper and molybdenum or copper and tungsten oxide binary metal salt will provide a single molecule diode laser imaging coating where an external near-IR absorber is not required. Thus, a near-IR absorber and a marking component are combined within the same molecule and in practice are retained intimately intact within individual discrete particles of the coating. In an embodiment, an ink formulation can include a marking component and a metal salt that absorbs laser irradiation at 700-2000 nm thereby causing the marking component to change colour.